

PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM



NORTH KOREAN MARITIME EXPANSION

NPIC/R-75/69
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Declass Review by NIMA/DOD

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NORTH KOREAN MARITIME EXPANSION

Recent overhead photography reveals that the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) is continuing to invest significant amounts of shipbuilding resources in expanding its modern ocean-going fishing industry. Since the initial observation of this expansion in [REDACTED], the number of major vessels has increased over 350 percent, with the greatest increase observed during [REDACTED]

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Photographic analysis of DPRK shipyards reveals that these units were built concurrently with a naval expansion program and occupied facilities that could have been utilized for combatant production. Also, the DPRK has purchased a number of vessels during this period. The DAESONG-SAN, RYONGAK-SAN, and their sister ships are the largest ships produced in North Korean shipyards to date. Based upon the type and number of modern vessels in the maritime fleet, it appears that North Korea is about to expand its fishing operations.

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Prior to the current expansion, the DPRK had three refrigerated fish transport ships. During late [REDACTED] the DPRK purchased, through Poland, two Icelandic refrigerated transports, the PONGDESAN and the NAPALSAN. Concurrently, the Nampo Shipyard was observed building the DAESONG-SAN, the first refrigerator vessel for support of west coast fishing operations.

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[REDACTED] there was a second significant increase in vessel acquisition. Dutch shipyards built the KUEMGANG-SAN, which was observed at Chongjin during [REDACTED] and the NUMBER 1 CHILBO-SAN, which was launched during the late spring. Indigenous programs contributed an additional three vessels. One, a sister ship to the DAESONG-SAN, was also observed being fitted out at Nampo Shipyard (Figure 1) during the spring of [REDACTED]. The others, two fish-factory ships observed at the Chongjin Shipyard in [REDACTED] (Figure 2), are a significant departure from the refrigerator transports. The RYONGAK-SAN was launched during early [REDACTED] and was followed by an apparent sister vessel which was in an advanced stage of construction when observed in [REDACTED]

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- 1 -

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FIGURE 1. WAMPO SHIPYARD, NORTH KOREA

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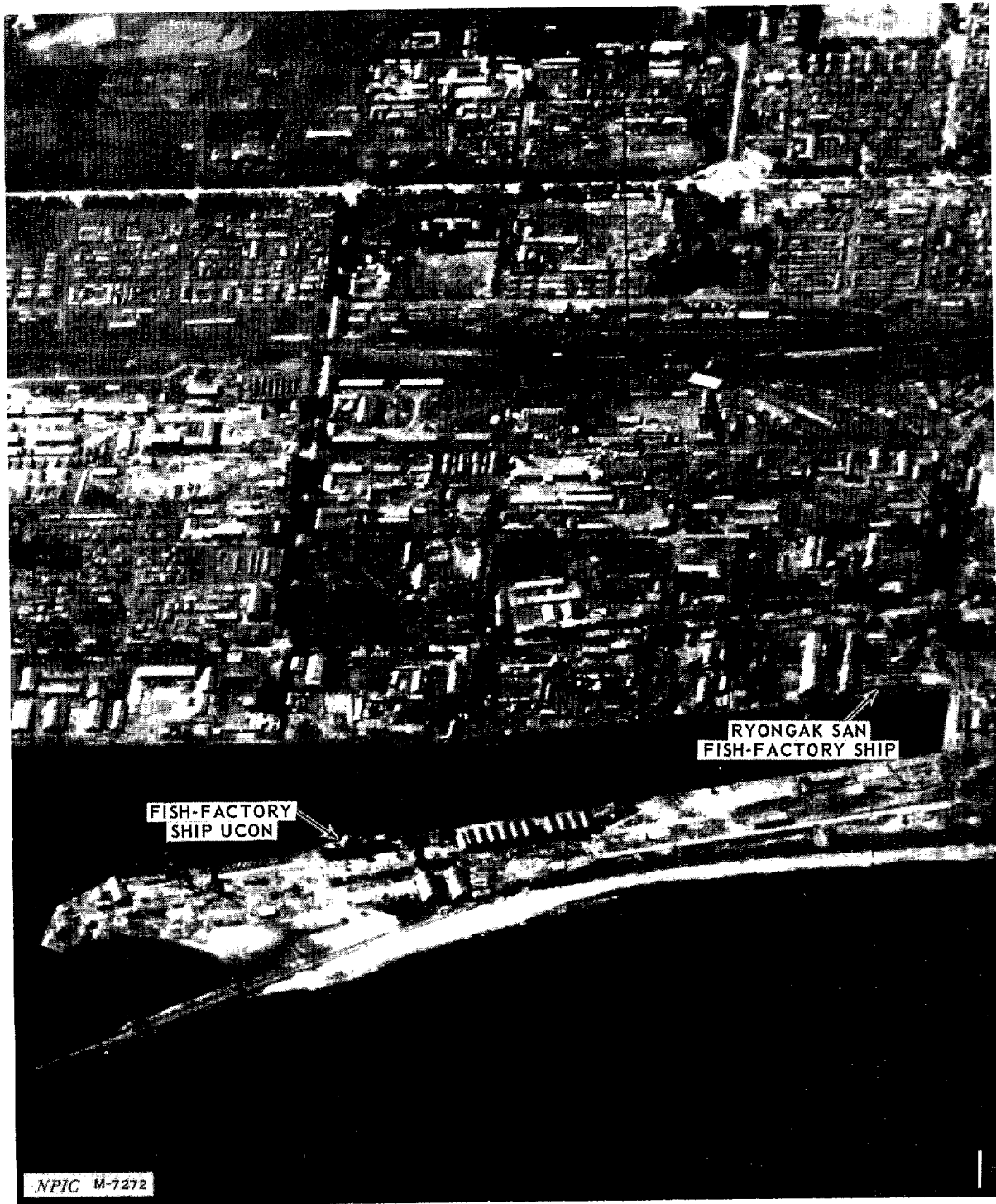


FIGURE 2. CHONGJIN SHIPYARD, NORTH KOREA

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- 3 -

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